

AFAA·NJ Spec-i-Fire

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February's Meeting;

Mass Notification

Our special guest speaker will be Todd Scherrer who is with SimplexGrinnell. Todd is a Jersey Boy who has many years in the industry; having worked for Simplex, Pyrotronics, and Wheelock to name a few.

Meeting Schedule For 2009

February 19	General Membership Meeting
March 19	Board of Directors Meeting
April 23	Board of Directors Meeting
May 21	General Membership Meeting
June 18	Board of Directors Meeting
August TBD	Yearly Planning Meeting
September 17	General Membership Meeting
October 15	Board of Directors Meeting
November 19	General Membership Meeting

Please remember that your dues cover one representative from your company's meal at each of our four yearly meetings. Additional attendees will be billed \$25, not a bad deal when you consider the meetings cost AFAANJ \$40 per person with a guarantee of 40 attending. Please help support your organization by attending meetings.

The NJ ASCET Chapter has been invited to attend our general meetings for \$25 each.

Dues notices are out!
Please renew ASAP

A word or two from the President;

Edward Armm, SET
Sr. Consultant RJA

My plan for this issue of the Spec-i-Fire was to research the effects training has on productivity, I read many studies and reports, and however, I found it very dry and not at all interesting. One thing I did find of interest, an old saying I have used for years is still true, if you think the cost of training is high wait until you have to pay the cost of ignorance.

I fully understand that we are in a recession, however, recession or not, untrained employees are a liability that an industry like ours simply can never afford. That said, I was left wondering what it takes to convince our members to fully support AFAANJ and realized I was looking at the wrong audience, our members do support training. It is our nonmember competitors that send out untrained personnel each day. Some are not concerned about liability as they themselves have no idea as to the responsibility that rests on those of us in the fire and life safety industry. Others seem to simply not care, you know the ones I am talking about, the ones that can do a visual inspection and sensitivity test of 500 smoke detectors in a half day.

To this end I am asking our members to redouble their support of AFAANJ and the industry this year buy inviting a nonmember company to join. It has been said that a rising tide raised all ships. It is time to educate our competition, level the playing field, and provide proper fire detection and life safety for our clients. The general public looks to us as the experts, it's time to act like that and learn all we can to make life safety the rule throughout New Jersey.

To get some public recognition AFAANJ sponsored drive time news and weather on radio station NJ 101.5, immediately after the spots started to air www.afaanj.org hits increased by 400%. Hopefully we will increase our membership and get more people the training that they need.

AFAANJ wishes to thank Joseph Cioffi, Jr of Bergen Protective Systems for stepping up to the plate, Joe

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ASCET & the AFAANJ

By Philip L. Gaughan, P.E., SET

I attended your November meeting at the invitation of your chapter President and felt inspired to write a short article for your newsletter.

What does it tell me when I hear that you belong to the AFAANJ? It tells me that you do take pride in your work. It also tells me that as far as you are concerned, Fire Protection is not just a job but a Profession. The AFAA as well as other fire protection associations play an important role in the promotion, education, and legislation of the fire protection industry. Did you know that there are two Professional Societies that represent you personally in the Fire Protection field? During my career in fire protection, I have been an active member in the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) in many capacities, including President of the Delaware Valley chapter as well as chairman of the education committee to which I have remained truly committed. In 1996 the SFPE came out with their first position paper that basically ignored the talents of the technician and stated that all fire protection work was the domain of the engineers. I was truly taken back by this position paper and sought an alternative and discovered the American Society of Certified Engineering Technicians (ASCET). Even though this society represented many kinds of certified technicians I saw that it had great potential for the fire protection technician.

ASCET is the only national, professional society created especially for, and administered by, engineering technicians and technologists in all engineering disciplines. On April 3, 1964, approximately seventy certified engineering technicians representing seventeen states attended an organizational meeting sponsored by the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE). At this meeting, ASCET was formed to pursue the concept of an "engineering team", and other mutual goals of engineering professionals. With the introduction of the Bachelor of Engineering Technology (BET) and technologist certification programs, ASCET membership was extended to Certified Engineering Technologists as well. In July, 1981, the ASCET Board of Directors voted to allow Regular membership to all engineering technicians and technologists who, although not certified, possess all other Society qualifications. At the request of several Registered PEs who wished to join, the Registered Member category with full privileges was added in 1991.

Oh, but you are members of the AFAA, which should be good enough. Most of you are the owners or managers of your company. Most of your employees are NICET Certified or should be. Do they consider themselves professionals? Just as the SFPE represents the fire protection engineer, ASCET represents the technician. ASCET supports and encourages NICET Certification. When I was president of the SFPE local chapter, I looked around the room and did not see many

technicians and learned that what the technicians wanted was a society of their own.

ASCET offers our members a variety of opportunities to grow both professionally and personally. You and your technicians can take advantage of technical seminars offered at a local chapter meeting or during the National Annual Meeting. These allow the technician to gain the CPD points necessary for recertification. By networking with other technicians across the country, technicians can learn how others in your field handle various situations. There are also opportunities for technicians to step into a leadership role by seeking office at the local chapter level as well as the national level.

The other major function of ASCET is representation. As the Northeast Regional VP of ASCET I have been asked to serve on the NICET Board of Governors which I was truly honored to accept. When I took my NICET examinations I did it for the self gratification of knowing that I took pride in my education, intelligence and experience in fire protection and to be rated by a third party organization (NICET) to be certified at the top of my field.

I am sure you have heard by now that there is a new position paper put out to clarify the responsibilities of the engineer and the technicians in the fire protection field. Many states and municipalities were trying to pass laws or ordinances requiring NICET certification in lieu of engineers. These laws/ordinances would violate the basic engineering laws. We can speculate as to why they wanted to do this, but the NICET Board of Governors took on the responsibility of creating a new position paper that the NSPE, SFPE, and the NICET Certified Technician could accept. As the only fire protection VP of ASCET and member of the NICET BOG, I was asked to serve as the only technician on this committee. Along with a few members of the NICET BOG, Wayne Moore (Chair NFPA 72 committee) (By the way, Wayne was a NICET Level IV in Alarms before becoming a PE) as well as being a member of ASCET, as well as members of the NSPE & SFPE put together a position paper that well represents how fire protection projects should be handled for the good of the owner and public safety. The paper clearly promotes the NICET Certified Technician as an important party of the Engineering Team.

I hope that you have by now come to the conclusion that it is important to have all our Technicians Certified and members of the Professional Society that represents them. Please take a minute to visit our web site at www.ascet.org at a nominal cost of only \$50.00 per year it is the best bang for your buck in this economy, as well as a means of achieving recognition in your chosen profession.

Philip L. Gaughan SET
ASCET Northeast Region VP
NICET Board of Governors

AHJ'S CORNER;

Proper Inspection, Test and Maintenance; Methods and Procedures.

By John Drucker, Fire Protection Subcode Official

Occasionally we'll hear from a property owner questioning the amount of time spent by maintenance technicians performing Inspection Test and Maintenance (ITM) work. It's not that that the property owner is complaining it took too long but rather how it could have been done so quickly. Statements like that raise suspicion usually prompting a through review of the ITM documentation and a visit to the property.

Upon closer examination we find that proper ITM was not conducted. While visual inspections are stipulated in NFPA-72 they are not the only requirement therein. Proper testing also includes operationally testing all systems components.

Let's discuss waterflow devices. The standards clearly require that to test these devices water be flowed equivalent to the single smallest sprinkler on the system. In speaking with inspection personnel we find that vane switches are routinely "exercised" simply by removing the cover and manually moving the actuating arm. Clearly this method of testing is in violation of the standard.

However even when water is flowed do our technicians know how to identify when the correct volume of water is flowing? Recently we conducted a site visit only to find that while actual waterflow tests were conducted no orifice existed in the inspectors test piping or discharge point. Essentially a 1" open ended pipe where the smallest sprinkler on the system was ½". Clearly this testing wasn't simulating the flow of the single smallest sprinkler.

On another project a defective first check in a backflow preventer caused the sprinkler system water supply to pulsate under the low flow condition of the inspectors test. Upon further investigation the vane type waterflow switch could be observed pulsating along with the incoming water supply. Problem was that the pulsation caused the vane type waterflow switch time delay to reset with each pulsation never activating the building fire alarm

system, yet a stream of water flowed from the inspectors test connection. The ITM documentation on file noted; "waterflow switch tested, alarmed in 30 seconds". Clearly the device had not been properly flow tested.

The proper testing and maintenance of smoke detectors is another area of concern, specifically sensitivity testing. NFPA-72 stipulates the acceptable methods; 1) Calibrated test method, 2) Manufacturers calibrated sensitivity test instrument, 3) Listed control equipment arranged for the purpose, 4) Smoke detector/control unit arrangement whereby the detector causes a signal at the control unit when its sensitivity is outside its listed sensitivity range, 5) Other calibrated sensitivity test method approved by the AHJ. The operative term here is calibrated test method or control equipment listed and arranged for the purpose. While smoke entry testing is a required method of detector testing it is not a substitute for sensitivity testing. There are still many conventional systems and even some lower end addressable that require field sensitivity testing of the systems smoke detectors. Making sure smoke detectors are operating properly can have the single largest impact on reducing nuisance alarms.

The proper testing of waterflow devices and smoke detectors are just a part of the overall ITM picture. The proper testing and maintenance of system standby batteries, notification appliances, manual stations, heat activated detectors and building fire safety functions are equally important.

John Drucker in addition to being a municipal fire protection subcode official, is a 32 year veteran of the fire service attaining the rank of captain of a combination truck/engine company and a member of AFAANJ.



AFAANJ MEMBER PAUL McGRATH OF CITY FIRE EQUIPMENT COMPANY HONORED BY NEW JERSEY FIRE PREVENTION & PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

Dedication to fire prevention education and training connects firefighters, property owners, building managers and citizens alike

East Hanover, NJ – November 12, 2008 – City Fire Equipment Company president **Paul McGrath** has been honored by the New Jersey Fire Prevention & Protection Association with a 2008 President's Award in recognition of his ongoing commitment to improving fire prevention and safety training. McGrath was presented with the award at the association's annual dinner held November 1 at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, NJ.

City Fire Equipment Company twice annually holds free **"FIRE FACTS SEMINARS"** on fire safety and prevention open to all New Jersey fire officials and fire code inspectors, as well as property owners and building managers in the residential, commercial, government and education sectors. The seminars allow firefighting professionals and those responsible for building and association safety to remain current in the latest fire safety developments.

McGrath is a well-known figure in the New Jersey fire prevention and fire equipment arenas, as well as in the engineering and construction, building and association, government and restaurant sectors. He is affiliated with more than a dozen associations dedicated to fire prevention and building safety, including the New Jersey Fire Prevention & Protection Association (NJFPPA); BOMA; the NJ Restaurant Association; the AFSA of New Jersey; the **AFAANJ**; the New Jersey Apartment Association; and the New Jersey SFPE.

The NJFPPA presents its Presidents Award to "individuals, firms, or organizations that have shown a dedication to activities that provide for increased fire safety for the state's citizens."

City Fire's seminars, which draw 200-300 participants from throughout New Jersey and provide continuing education unit credits, are held at Seton Hall University in coordination with the South Orange Fire Department. **'FIRE FACTS SEMINAR #15,'** NJ Fire Prevention Code Update to the IFC 2006: NJ Edition was held on January 8, 2009, the featured speaker was Robert Davidson of Davidson Code Concepts. There were over 300 Fire Subcode Officials, Fire Marshalls and other life safety industry professionals in attendance.

For information about **'Fire Facts'** training seminars please call 973-560-1600.

McGrath has been with City Fire Equipment Company since 1981, when he started with the company as a technician servicing fire extinguishers. He became president in 1996. He resides in Union Township.



Paul McGrath, President of City Fire Equipment Company, pictured with his wife, Laura, recently earned a 2008 President's Award for ongoing commitment to improving fire prevention and safety training from the New Jersey Fire Prevention & Protection Association.

With great respect and sadness
AFAANJ mourns the loss of
Ms Barbara Cook

Barbara Cook passed away on Tuesday, December 2, 2008. She was an advocate of fire safety and a friend to the AFAANJ.

Ms Cook worked for the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs since 1999.

We got to know Barbara as the Executive Director of the State Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors who oversees the Fire Alarm, Burglar Alarm, and Locksmith Advisory Committee.

On behalf of the membership of AFAANJ the Board of Directors sent flowers to her funeral and made a donation to the Ryerson School Playground Fund in Wayne, NJ. AFAANJ and consumers throughout the state will miss her willingness to work with people in order to reach a goal, uncommon in the public sector.



May she rest in peace.

was elected to a Board position in the NJBFAA and has agreed to be the liaison between our organizations to help us work together for training and legislative issues.

WEB SITE UP-DATES

Each member that has a website will find that there is a hyper link on the [membership list](#) found on the website direction anyone that clicks on it to the members site. Please verify that we have the correct information and contact me if you do not wish to have the link there or if anything needs correction.

There are number of updates to the main menu section [Code Up-Dates](#), the name may be a give away, there is also a link on the home page titled [Click here for NJ's Latest Code Up-Dates](#).

As always my best regards,

Friday, January 23, 2009

New ADA Accessibility Guidelines Adoption Still in Limbo

By Gary L. Cole AIA, Esq.

The revised Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), first released by the U.S. Access Board for public comment on July 23, 2004, were not, contrary to expectations, signed into law by President Bush prior to leaving office. In 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was followed by the ADAAG's first publication in 1991. On September 25, 2008, President George W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008, which became effective on January 1, 2009. Among its provisions, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 reverses certain recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings. More information regarding the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 can be found on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's website.

Though as of the date of this posting no updates regarding the ADAAG's status appear on the Department of Justice's ADA website, according to a DOJ representative on the DOJ's ADA Information Line, the ADAAG will likely be subject to the new Obama administration's review and a date of final adoption is unknown.

The new ADAAG features a revised format, the first major change since it was adopted and brings it into line with model building codes such as the International Building Code. The revised ADAAG's new requirements will affect anyone in the real estate development industry including, but not limited to architects, contractors, and attorneys.

Taken from the [LAW/ARK blog](#)